

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 - 11. (cancelled)

12. (currently amended) A method of making bristle arrangements for subsequent use in a brush seal, comprising the steps of:

arranging a plurality of tufts of bristles each having a bead at one end within a fixture;

said arranging step comprising placing each said tuft in the fixture in a skewed fashion relative to a line extending radially from a center of the fixture;

said arranging step further comprising placing each said tuft in said fixture so that a portion of the bristles forming each tuft with said bead project from said fixture to form a plurality of exposed portions; and

joining said exposed portions together while said tufts are in said fixture using a welding machine so as to form said bristle arrangements.

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (original) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein said plurality of bristles are metallic.

16. (currently amended) The method as recited in claim 12, further comprising the step of securing the bristle arrangements between plates subsequent to said joining step to form a brush seal.

17. (previously presented) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein said arranging step comprises arranging said tufts in an arc.

18. (original) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein said arc is a circle.

19. (original) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the joining step occurs at an outer diameter or an inner diameter of said arc.

20. (original) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the joining step creates a continuous joint along said arc.

21 - 23. (cancelled)

24. (currently amended) A method of making a brush seal having multiple stages, comprising the steps of:

providing discrete plates and discrete bristle arrangements within a fixture;

creating a stack of said discrete plates and discrete bristle arrangements to define said multiple stages of said brush seal within said fixture; and

simultaneously joining said stack of said discrete plates and said discrete bristle arrangements together while in said fixture to create said multiple stages of said brush seal.

25. (original) The method as recited in claim 24, wherein said bristle arrangement includes:

a plurality of bristles arranged along a length; and

a joint extending along said length and securing said plurality of bristles together.

26. (original) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein said plurality of bristles are arranged in an arc, and said joint extends along said arc.

27. (original) The method as recited in claim 26, wherein said arc is a circle.

28. (original) The method as recited in claim 25, wherein said joint extends continuously along said length.

29. (original) The method as recited in claim 24, wherein the joining step comprises welding.

30. (currently amended) The method as recited in claim 29, wherein said ~~plates~~ discrete plate providing step include providing a windage cover.

31 - 43. (cancelled)

44. (new) A method for forming a brush seal comprising the steps of:

arranging a plurality of tufts of bristles in a fixture;

spreading said bristles in a uniform fashion around said fixture; and

welding said bristles together to form a one-piece bristle ring.

45. (new) A method for forming a multiple stage brush seal comprising the steps of:

placing a first plate in a fixture;

placing a first bristle ring on the first plate;

placing a second plate over the first bristle ring;

placing a second bristle ring over the second plate;

placing a third plate over the second bristle ring; and

fusion welding the first plate, the first bristle ring, the second plate, the second bristle ring, and the third plate in a single step to form said multiple stage brush seal.

46. (new) The method according to claim 45, wherein said first plate placing step comprises placing a back plate in the fixture.

47. (new) The method according to claim 45, wherein said second plate placing step comprises placing a middle plate in the fixture.

48. (new) The method according to claim 45, wherein said third plate placing step comprises placing a windage cover in said fixture.

49. (new) The method according to claim 45, wherein said fusion welding step comprises welding the first, second and third plates and the first and second bristle rings together while the first, second and third plates and the first and second bristle rings are in the fixture.